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STATINTL

Dennison May Get CIA Hat

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NORFOLK—Naval officers often tend to inherit, by a series of successive appointments, the "hats" of their seniors of similar experience and ability.

This has been the case with Adm. Robert L. Dennison.

Close military and civilian associates of Dennison agreed Wednesday that the chain may not end with the admiral's retirement May 1.

In his last two assignments, Dennison filled posts once held by Adm. Jerauld Wright.

First was in March 1959, when he became commander in chief of U.S. Naval Forces, Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean (now called commander in chief U.S. Naval Forces Europe). Wright had held that office from 1952 to 1954.

Second was in March 1960, when Dennison relieved Wright here as NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic, commander in chief U.S. Atlantic Fleet, and commander in chief U.S. Atlantic Command.

NATIONALIST CHINA

Wright retired at that time, and a year later he was recalled to duty as a member of the Board of National Estimates, a Central Intelligence Agency advisory group.

With Dennison's retirement less than a month away, it was learned Tuesday that Adm. Wright will be appointed ambassador to Nationalist China.

The assumption is that Dennison again could don one of Wright's former hats.

The Board of National Estimates is composed of high-level military and civilian experts who evaluate intelligence estimates of nations of the world.

Secretary of the Navy Fred Korth, in paying tribute to Dennison here Tuesday night, mentioned the admiral's "experience and understanding of the subtle interrelationships between the various nations."

The secretary told Dennison: "I am confident that we can continue to expect further great service to your country in any number of capacities, should that request be made to you."

Dennison, in response to the tribute, made it clear he hopes to continue in U.S. service.

PUBLIC CAREER

He referred to the approaching end of his Navy career and added: "But I hope it is not the end of my public career."

Both Korth and Dennison, when asked later whether the comments contained possible hints as to the admiral's future, said they did not know of any plans in the making toward further public service by him.

Dennison explained that he has rented a home at Virginia Beach and will remain in the area this summer.

Several men closely associated with the admiral said Wednesday any assumption that Dennison may succeed Wright in the CIA post is not illogical.

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